Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT FREEDOM ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL May 10, 2006

The attached report contains the results of the first two phases (Self-Assessment Process and On-Site Validation Visit) of the Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS). This Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is conducted by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Special Education Services (SES), as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for students with disabilities through enhanced partnerships between district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the completion of the Self-Assessment and the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in Freedom Academy Charter School on January 10, 2006, included student record reviews, interviews with school administrators, related service professionals, teachers, parents, and students. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of parents. Information from these data sources was shared in an exit meeting attended by staff from Freedom Academy Charter School and members of the Steering Committee.

This report contains a more complete description of the process utilized to collect data and to determine strengths, areas out of compliance with the requirements of IDEA, and recommendations for improvement in each of the core IDEA areas.

Areas of Strength

The validation team found the following:

General Supervision

- Freedom Academy has qualified personnel.
- Caseloads are within maximum limits.
- School climate was friendly and orderly, with student artwork prominently displayed in the hallways and adults visible between class periods.
- Paraeducators provide additional support in general education classrooms, allowing for more inclusive special education services.
- CRT scores demonstrate a strong upward trend line.
- In all classrooms, teachers list expectations, goals, and schedules on board.
- Parents reported that the principal knows all students within the school and is actively involved in special education.
- Parent volunteers are actively utilized and visible throughout the school.

Parent Involvement

- All services are being provided as stated on IEPs.
- Procedural Safeguards provided to parents when required.
- Parental consent is documented prior to evaluation and placement in special education.
- Special education services are provided at times when students will not miss access to general education curriculum classes.
- Parents feel that the school personnel are respectful of student with disabilities, communicate with each other frequently, and know student needs.
- Parents report receiving copies of IEPs and discussing ESY annually.
- The parent focus group was a sincere sharing of positive experiences and concerns. Parents were well-informed and pleasant in discussing their views of the special education program.
- Parents feel that they are listened to by school staff.
- Parents participate in IEP meetings as shown by their signatures and verbal reports at the parent focus group.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- The evaluation team determines if additional data are needed prior to evaluations.
- Freedom Academy has low suspension and expulsion rates.
- Current IEPs were found in special education files.
- Accommodations were listed clearly on student IEPs.

- Files were organized and contained the required minimum contents.
- Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements contained evidence of functional performance.
- Strong school administrator knowledge of special education process adds to strength of inclusionary vision.
- Freedom Academy has a school-wide focus on meeting the individual needs of all students.
- Very few instances of problem behavior resulting in a need for disciplinary procedures and consequences.

Transitions

Freedom Academy does not have students of transition age at this time.

Disproportionality

- School ethnicity and disability rates are comparable to state rates and charter school enrollment.
- Freedom Academy reported no suspension/expulsions for longer than 10 days during the 2004-2005 school year.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- ✓ Pre-Referral Interventions form did not document at least 2 classroom interventions implemented before referral or at least 2 classroom interventions failed with supporting data included. Referral forms missing.
- ✓ Copies to parents of Eligibility Determination form, IEP, and Evaluation Summary Report not documented.
- ✓ Notice of Meetings for IEP, Placement, and Eligibility meetings missing or incomplete.
- ✓ Written Notice for Evaluation/Reevaluation, IEP implementation, and Placement not documented.
- ✓ Progress Report statement not included with IEP.
- ✓ FAPE not provided to all students with disabilities requiring speech and language services.
- ✓ Eligibility Determination did not document participation by regular education teacher or was not included in file.
- ✓ Evaluation Procedures not followed: students were not assessed using a variety of assessment tools; Evaluation Summary Report did not include data.
- ✓ IEP goals did not address all areas of need; did not document evidence that ESY decision was reached, and did not document evidence goals, services, and amount of time for ESY.
- ✓ Timelines for Reevaluation exceeded.

^{*}These areas represent items where the visiting team could not locate appropriate documentation of requirements of IDEA 2004 and Utah State Special Education Rules in student records or other data sources.